

BIBLE TRUTH 12, LESSON 2: PLANNER/OVERVIEW

GETTING STARTED: Welcome and Opening Songs (*introduce unit and get kids moving with these songs*)

Welcome to Praise Factory: PFI: Praise Factory Investigators Theme Song *PFI ESV Songs 12 CD, Track 1*

Rules to Help Us Worship God and Love Others: WoGoLOA Classroom Rules Song
PFI ESV Songs 12 CD, Track 2

Big Question Under Investigation: Big Question 12 Songs *PFI ESV Songs 12 CD, Tracks 3,4*

Big Question Bible Verse: Ephesians 5:1-2 Song: *PFI ESV Songs 12, Track 5*
Extra Bible Verse Song: Let Everyone Who Names the Name: 2 Timothy 2:19,22, ESV PFI ESV Songs 12, Track 6

DIGGING DEEP DOWN: Key Concept and Story (*introduce the Bible Truth and tell the related story*)

Bible Truth 12: God's People Suffer According to God's Good Plan

Bible Truth Hymn: How Firm a Foundation, vs. 3,4 *PFI ESV Songs 12 Tracks 41,42*

Bible Verse: 1 Peter 1:6-7

Bible Verse Song: For a Little While: 1 Peter 1:6-7 *PFI ESV Songs 12, Track 43*
Extra Bible Verse Song: If God Is for Us: Romans 8:31,32,35, 38-39 PFI ESV Songs 12 Track 44
Extra Bible Verse Song: Who Shall Separate Us? Romans 8:31,32,35, 38,39 PFI ESV Songs 12 Track 45

Lesson 2 Story of the Saints: The Case of the Atheist under Attack

TAKING ACTION: Response Activities (*choose from among these activities*)

Snack and Discussion Planner: Triumph through Terrible Trials

ACTS Prayer: Prayer Sheet

Bible Truth Review: Discussion Questions and Game: Circus Lion

Bible Truth Hymn: How Firm a Foundation, vs. 3,4 *PFI ESV Songs 12 Tracks 41,42*
Song, Sign Language and Song Game: Sign It, Say It, What Does It Mean? **PFI ESV SONGS 12 BOOK or ONLINE**

Bible Verse Review: 1 Peter 1:6-7 Discussion Sheet and Game: Bowling Ball Verse

Bible Verse Song: For a Little While: 1 Peter 1:6-7 *PFI ESV Songs 12, Track 43*
Song, Sign Language and Song Game: Pass the Secret Sign **PFI ESV SONGS 12 BOOK or ONLINE**

Story Review: Discussion Questions and Game: Egg Toss

Case Replay, Jr: Drama Activity for Youngest Children (children do same story actions together)

Case Replay, Sr: Drama Activity for Most Children (children re-tell story with individual parts)

Craft: A Pinch of Incense on a Roman Altar to Caesar

VIPP (Very Important Prayer Person) Prayer Time: Coloring Sheets (back of book) & Game: Over, Under & Throw

TAKING IT HOME: Take Home Sheet for Review and Family Devotions

PFI Pronto: Bible Truth 12, Lesson 2 **PFI ESV PRONTOS 12 BOOK or ONLINE**

The Case of the Atheist Under Attack

by Connie Dever

Our story is called:**The Case of the Atheist Under Attack.****As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:**

1. Who was the Atheist Under Attack? Who did he refuse to confess as God?
2. How did he show he suffered only according to God's good plan?

This story doesn't take place in Bible times. It takes place in Smyrna--modern day Izmir, Turkey-- about one hundred years after Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead.

Long ago when our story took place, Smyrna was a part of the great Roman empire. It was known as the "Glory of Asia," and considered the most beautiful city in that entire Roman province. Smyrna had grown rich on the goods brought into its harbor from around the Roman world. Rich merchants built luxurious houses with beautiful hand-painted walls, colorful mosaic tile floors, and beautiful, enclosed gardens, high on the hills above the city and the sea. The city, itself, was filled with temples and government buildings built with massive, carved columns and lined with statues of famous men and Roman gods. Smyrna had a large library and the largest public theater and all of Roman Asia. Yes, it was easy to see why Smyrna was first among the cities of Asia.

But Smyrna claimed to be first in something else, too. Something that made life very hard for Christians. It was the first city to worship Caesar, the Roman king, as Lord and God. "Once a year every Roman citizen must burn a pinch of incense on the altar to our God, Caesar, proclaiming that he is Lord," it was decreed. "Every citizen who does so will receive a certificate of his confession and will continue to enjoy the rights of a citizen and good-standing. Anyone who does not is a traitor to his king. He will lose his rights as a citizen and be punished."

The Christians wanted to be good, obedient citizens, they couldn't ever sacrifice to Caesar or call him their Lord and God. Yahweh was the one, true God and Jesus Christ was their only Lord. They would rather be put in jail or die than obey this new law.

The Smyrnans began to abuse the Christians.

"Down with the atheists -- you unbelievers in the Roman gods!" they jeered. "It is bad enough that you refuse to believe in our gods and lead others to worship that dead man, Jesus. But now you won't even confess Caesar and the God and Lord that he is! You are traitors and we will be rid of you!"

These were no idle threats. Soon the Christians weren't allowed to buy food at the market and no one dared hire them. Their houses and things were taken from them. They were arrested and dragged into prison. Many were killed. It became very difficult and dangerous to be a believer in Smyrna, but God was with them. He gave them the strength to stand strong in their sufferings.

The Lord gave them something else to help them endure their hardships. He gave them a young pastor named Polycarp. Polycarp had learned about Jesus from the apostle John himself. John passed on to Polycarp everything Jesus had taught him about God and how God wanted his followers to live. Polycarp took good care of the believers at Smyrna. He taught them from God's word, he encouraged them to trust God to bravely confess his name, even to their death. Polycarp was a very humble man, but very bold, too. Among the churches, he became famous for helping confused Christians understand what Jesus really taught. But among the Romans he became famous powerfully preaching the good news of Jesus. They called him "The Destroyer of the Gods" because his preaching turned so many Romans from worshipping the Roman gods to following Jesus instead.

One day, Polycarp received some sad news from Antioch, a city hundreds of miles south of Smyrna. The Romans there had begun to punish Christians for their

Story-telling Tips

Ahead of time:

1. Read the Bible verses and story. Pray!
2. Create story cue cards on index cards (or highlight text).
3. Practice telling story dramatically, timing your presentation. Shorten, if necessary to fit your allotted time.
4. Decorate area with story props that help bring your story alive.

During your presentation:

1. Maintain as much eye contact as possible as you tell the story. Point to/use props at important points in the story. Include the kids in your story with a few questions about what they think will happen or words/concepts that might be new to them.
2. Watch the kids for signs that their attention span has been reached. Shorten, if necessary.

unwillingness to worship the Roman gods. They had arrested Ignatius, the wise old pastor, and dragged him before the governor of Antioch.

“Worship the gods and live, Ignatius! But this honor them and die!” The governor threatened.

“I would rather die than betray Jesus!” Ignatius boldly replied.

“Then to the lions of Rome you go, you atheist!” The governor declared. Ignatius was chained and handed over to Roman soldiers. These men would take Ignatius to the coliseum in Rome, where thousands would watch and cheer as he was thrown to hungry lions.

Polycarp knew the thousand – mile route from Antioch to Rome well. “Ignatius and his guards will stop here in Smyrna on their way to Rome. I will gather the pastors from the churches in nearby towns and we will wait for them to pass through Smyrna. Perhaps we can comfort and encourage Ignatius,” Polycarp planned.

Sure enough, before long Ignatius and the soldiers arrived in Smyrna. Polycarp and the others gathered around him that night to bring him good food and new hope. Yet, it was Ignatius who encouraged them. “God has given me strength to stay strong in my sufferings and keep on trusting in him,” Ignatius told them. “And soon I know I will be in heaven with him forever. Stay loyal to Jesus, friends. He will hope you enjoy your sufferings, too.”

The next day Ignatius and the Roman soldiers were off to Rome. Months later, news of Ignatius’ death reached Polycarp. He had faced the lions bravely, glorifying the Lord in his suffering to the very end.

Almost 50 years past since Ignatius’ death. Polycarp, the young man, had become Polycarp, the eighty-six-year-old man. For over half a century, Polycarp had cared for the Christians of Smyrna and preached the good news of Jesus boldly. Never forgetting Ignatius’ encouragement, he encouraged them all to trust God and to stay loyal to Jesus, even to death.

But now, it was Polycarp’s turn to stand strong in suffering for Jesus. During a festival honoring Caesar as their God, a mob of the Smyrneans began to chant, “Down with the Christians, the atheists! They dishonor Caesar, our God! Bring us Polycarp! He must die!”

The crowd rushed to Polycarp’s house and beat down

down his door. Polycarp wasn’t there, but two servant boys were questioned harshly until they revealed where he was. “They’ve hidden him in a haystack and a farm outside of town,” they confessed.

Soldiers went to the farm and found Polycarp. The old man went with them without a fuss. He was ready to suffer and die for Jesus. The soldiers put Polycarp on a donkey and let him to the crowd gathered in the public theater. They cheered loudly as Polycarp was brought in and presented to the governor of Smyrna.

“You are an old man, Polycarp,” the governor said to him. “Why should you die in this way? Don’t be trouble. Place your pinch of incense on the altar. Make your own to Caesar. That’s all you have to do, and I will release you. Curse Christ! Say, ‘Away with the atheists!’ And you are free man!” the governor promised. He knew that it Polycarp would but say these words in front of the crowd, it would be a huge discouragement to the Christians and any others who heard the good news of Jesus. He waited hopefully for Polycarp to reply.

But God gave Polycarp the strength to stand strong even now. “... Polycarp with his face firmly set, looked at all the crowd in the stadium and waved hand towards them, size, looked up to heaven, and cried: ‘Away with the godless!... For eighty-six years... I have been Christ’s servant, and He has never done me wrong: how can I curse my king who saved me?’

‘I have wild lions that I will use on you,’ said the governor... ‘If you make light of the lions, I’ll have you destroyed by fire...’ he promised Polycarp.

But Polycarp answered him: ‘The fire you threaten burns for a time that as soon extinguished; there is a fire you know nothing about – the fire of judgment to come and of eternal punishment, the fire reserved for the ungodly. But why do you hesitate? Do what you want.’

The governor was amazed, and sent the crier to stand in the middle of the arena and announce three times: “Polycarp has confessed that he is a Christian.”

Then shout went up from every throat: ‘Polycarp must be burned alive!’

The crowd rushed and gathered logs and sticks... When the bonfire was ready... Polycarp prayed... When he had offered up the Amen and completed his prayer,

the man in charge lit the fire, and a great flame shot up.” (Eusebius, *History of the Church*) And just like Ignatius, Polycarp bravely endured his suffering, glorifying God to the end.

Cracking the Case:

It's time to answer our Case Questions.

1. Who was the Atheist Under Attack? Who did he refuse to confess as God?

Polycarp. He refused to confess that the Roman king was God.

2. How did he show he suffered only according to God's good plan?

He had known God's faithfulness to him for many, many years. He knew God would only allow this suffering if it was for his good and God's glory.

Something For You and Me

Our Bible Truth is:

God's People Suffer According to God's Good Plan

Our Bible Verse is: 1 Peter 1:6-7 NIV 1984

“...for a little while you may have suffered grief in all kinds of trials. These have come that your faith—which is of greater worth than gold which perishes though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.”

What about you and me? The Lord has told us that all of God's people will face suffering that has been planned for them, according to His good plan. Many of God's people may never know persecution like what Ignatius, Polycarp and many other Christians in the Roman Empire faced. But some, even now do face terrible sufferings like these. How can God's people today endure sufferings like these? The same way as Ignatius and Polycarp did long ago: by remembering that they will only have to endure what their good God has allowed. He will help them endure their sufferings, not by their own strength but by God's—and He is always strong enough to give them what they need.

How can we be God's people? By turning away from our sins and trusting in Jesus as our Savior. Then, like Polycarp and Ignatius and those other believers, we can know the wonderful, one, true God. And we can rest that God will be at work doing great things for our

good and His glory even through all our sufferings.

Let's praise God for being so careful in what sufferings He plans for His People; and, for always giving them strength to endure them. Let's ask Him to help us to turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Let's ask Him to give us strength and even joy in our sufferings and to honor Him in them.

Close in prayer.

Closing ACTS Prayer

A God, we praise You for being so careful in what sufferings You plan for Your people.

C God, we confess that many times we don't want any sufferings, even if they are for Your good plans for us. We confess that we grumble about them or act fearful that we will not be able to endure them, even with Your help.

T God, we thank You for always giving Your people the strength they need to endure the sufferings You have chosen for them.

S We ask You to work in our hearts, helping us to confess our sins, turn away from them and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Help give us strength and even joy in our sufferings. Use them to make us more like Jesus and to honor You.

Special Words

Governor: A ruler over a particular city or area.

Incense: A powder that gives off a nice smell when burned. Often used as an offering to gods in many religions.

Caesar: The title of the Roman king.

ACTS PRAYER ACTIVITY

Use this sheet to write down your ACTS Prayer

Instructions:

Use this sheet to help the children apply the Bible Truth into a prayer. You can use the ACTS provided or even better, have the kids think of their own applications. Also have the children add their personal requests to the prayer, too. Lead the children in the prayer or let them pray sections, with your help. Never force a child to pray! Non-readers can participate by you whispering a section of the prayer into their ear and allowing them to pray it aloud for the group.

ADORATION:

God, we praise You for being the perfect Planner of Your people's sufferings, according to Your good plans.

God, we praise You for being.....

Add your own Adorations:

CONFESSION:

We confess that many times we complain when we suffer instead of turning to You and trusting in You and Your good plans. We need a Savior to save us from our sins.

God, we have sinned against You....

Add your own Confessions:

THANKSGIVING:

Thank You, God, for always giving Your people the strength to endure the sufferings You has planned for them. Thank You for Jesus, who suffered for Your people's sins so they wouldn't have to.

God, we thank You for...

Add your own Thanksgivings:

SUPPLICATION:

God, work in our hearts. Help us to turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our own Savior. Use our sufferings to strengthen our faith, love and dependence on You; and to result in the most praise, glory and honor for You that is possible.

God, we need Your help...

Add your own Supplication:

SNEAKY SNACK

Can you figure out how this snack relates to the story?

Snack: Triumphant through Terrible Trials

Animal cracker “lions” and pretzel stick “bonfire” with candy corn “fire” in the middle. Can add Teddy graham Polycarp and Ignatius, if you want.

This is only a suggestion. Feel free to modify. Be mindful of allergy issues among your children!

Case Tie-in: Polycarp and Ignatius suffered terribly for their faith, yet God helped them endure these sufferings triumphantly and glorify Him through them.

SOUL FOOD

Food for thought during snack time

1. What does the snack have to do with the story?

Choose a few questions from the other activity discussion sheets to talk about during this snack time.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

Directions: Read and discuss Bible Truth, using a FEW of the questions. Play game. Feel free to modify the game to fit your children.

God's People Suffer According to God's Good Plan

God has promised His people that though they will suffer in many ways here on earth, they will only suffer according to His good and perfect plan. God promises to only use their sufferings to do good to them and bring glory to His name. He will use their sufferings to make them holy and to strengthen their faith, their love and their dependence on Him. God's people don't like to suffer, but they trust in God's good purposes in allowing them to suffer and in His promise to use it for their good and His glory. They know that God's Holy Spirit will always give them the strength they need to endure the suffering He allows. God's people count it an honor to suffer for Jesus, the One who suffered most of all, when He took the punishment for their sins upon the cross. But, they also look forward with great excitement to the day when they will live with God and their sufferings and sadnesses will be gone forever.

Understanding the Bible Truth

1. When will God's people suffer? *Here on earth.*
2. How will they suffer? *In many ways, but only according to His plan.*
3. What will He use their sufferings to do in them? *To strengthen their faith, love and dependence upon Him; to make them holy.*
4. What will God always, only use His people's sufferings to do? *To do good to them and to bring glory to His name.*
5. Do God's people like suffering? *No.*
6. What will God give His people by His Holy Spirit? *The strength they need to endure all the sufferings He has chosen to allow in their lives.*
7. What do God's people want even more than not to suffer? *To see their sufferings strengthen their faith and for them to result in praise, glory and honor.*
8. What will their sufferings result in when Jesus comes back? *Praise, glory and honor.*
9. Why do God's people think it is an honor to suffer for God? *Because of how He sent His Son to suffer and die for them.*
10. What do God's people look forward to? *The day when they will live with God and their sufferings and sadnesses will be gone forever.*

Story Connection Questions

How does the case story point to the **Bible Truth: God's People Suffer According to God's Good Plan:**

1. How did Ignatius and Polycarp encourage the other Christians by how they suffered? *They endured their suffering as an honor. They showed the other Christians that Jesus was worth confessing, even if it meant their death. They showed them that the Lord truly did give strength to endure even these kinds of terrible trials.*

Bible Verse Connection Question

1. What does our Bible Truth have to do with our **Bible Verse: 1 Peter 1:6-7:** "...for a little while you may have suffered grief in all kinds of trials. These have come that your faith—which is of greater worth than gold which perishes though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed."?

God's people know that God will use their sufferings to prove their faith genuine and result in praise, glory and honor because He is the one who perfectly planned their sufferings and gave them the strength to do this.

Life Application Questions

1. How can knowing about God being the perfect planner of their sufferings help God's people? *They can be encouraged in the middle of suffering that God will give them strength to endure through it; and they can know that God is only using their sufferings for their good and His glory.*
2. How can we become God's people? *By turning away from our sins and trusting in Jesus as our Savior.*

ACTS Questions

1. What is something we can praise God for because of this Bible Truth?

Praise God for being the perfect Planner of His people's sufferings.

2. What are sins we can confess to God because of this Bible Truth? *Confess how many times we complain when we suffer instead of turning to God and trusting in Him .*

3. What is something we can thank God for because of this Bible Truth?

Thank God for always giving His people the strength to endure the sufferings He has planned for them.

4. What is something we can ask God for because of this Bible Truth?

Ask God to work in our hearts, helping us to turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our own Savior. Ask God to use our sufferings to strengthen our faith, love and dependence on Him; and to result in the most praise, glory and honor for Him that is possible.

The Gospel

1. Suffering came to the world through sin, yet God has shown mercy to sinners. What has God done to bring an end to sin, death and the sufferings of His people? What is the gospel?

God is the good Creator and King of the world. He made people to worship Him and live by His good laws. But we are all sinners who've rebelled against Him. We all deserve death--God's just, eternal punishment for our sins. How terrible! But God has good news for us. In His great mercy, God sent His Son, Jesus to earth as a man to save sinners. He lived the perfect life that pleases God. (He's the only one who's ever done that!) He offered it up to God His Father as the perfect sacrifice for sins when He suffered and died on the cross. Then, on the third day, Jesus rose from the dead in victory. He had fully paid for the sins of God's people, so they wouldn't have to! Now all who turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior will receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life with God. They will be His very own special people who will know Him and enjoy Him forever. We can be God's people, too, if we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our own Savior.

Game: Circus Lions

Materials

Optional funny wig, glasses, hat, etc.

Hula hoop, etc.

Bible Truth Questions

Preparing the Game

1. Choose 20+ questions for your game from the Bible Truth Discussion Questions, or make up your own.
2. Write the Bible Truth questions on small thin strips of paper (or make a photocopy of the Bible Truth Discussion Questions and simply cut them into strips) and put them in the bag/bowl.

Playing the Game

Tell the children that they are circus lions. Have them get on all four and roar and roam like lions. Have them “jump” through a hula hoop, etc. Then tell them they are getting very, very sleepy and must lie down....on their backs... in their den. Tell them that sleeping lions lie very still, make no noise, and keep their eyes open! Tell them that you are the Lion Trainer and are trying to wake up the Sleeping, Lazy Lions to perform in the circus. Any lion that makes a move, a sound or smiles will have to get up! Put on your funny wig, glasses, hat, etc. and make your rounds, trying to catch the lions moving, making noise or to make them smile. Lions who are caught are asked to answer a question correctly as their circus trick to before they can go back to their den. Have one of the lions caught to pick a question. Read it to the whole class and take their answers. If they don't get it right, then the child/children must stay out until the next round and next correct answer. If desired, let some of the children take turns being the Lion Trainer.

Game continues as number of questions, time, and attention span allow.

Non-competitive Option

Let all the caught lions join back into the circus, even if the class answers a question incorrectly. Put the question back in the bag for further review.

Optional TAKING IT TO OTHERS Activity: Quiz Questions

Have the children choose a few of the questions from the game to ask the parents/other children during TAKING IT TO OTHERS time. Help pre-readers by whispering the question in their ear and letting them ask it aloud to the parents/other children. Make sure you read the Bible verse aloud before you ask your questions.

Directions:

1. Write words to song in large print before class.
2. Play the song for the children, helping them follow along on the song sheet.
3. Discuss the song, using a few questions from the discussion sheet. *Don't use them all!*
4. Introduce sign language for key words of your choice from sign language sheet for your song. Use as few or as many as you think the children can learn.
5. Sing and sign the song. Sign language as well as large format lyrics and sheet music are found in the PFI Unit Songbook or online.
6. If desired, play the Song Game.

Optional TAKING IT TO OTHERS Activity: Presenting and Singing the Song

1. Sing and sign the song, encouraging the watching children/parents to join in.
2. Ask the class some of the questions listed below. The Bible Truth Connection Question is particularly good to help them understand how the song ties in with the Bible Truth.

How Firm a Foundation

Verse 3

"When thro' fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply;
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

Verse 4

"The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;
That soul, tho' all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no, never, no, never forsake!"

Listen to it on PFI ESV Songs 12, Tracks 41,42

Understanding the Song

1. What is a "fiery trial?" *It usually has nothing to do with fire, but just means a really hard time of suffering we have to go through.*
2. What "pathway" do these fiery trials lie upon? *Not a real path or road that you walk on. Pathway is another way of saying things you go through in your life. So, it's talking about the times of suffering you face in life.*
3. What does "supply" mean and what shall be the believer's supply when going thro their difficult trials? *Supply means to be everything you need. God's grace—that is, His gifts of strength, faith, hope, patience, etc that He freely gives His people—will be enough for them to make it through even the hardest of sufferings.*
4. What shall not hurt the believer? *The flame.*
5. What does he mean by "flame?" *The writer has been talking about "fiery trials"—hard times the believer goes through. A flame is what burns or hurts you. He is saying that even when His people go through "fiery," hard times of suffering, they will never let the trials be anything but for the good and His glory.*
6. What does God design (plan) for the "flame" to do? *Just like fire is used to purify gold by melting out impurities (called dross) and make it more beautify and pure, so God only plans to use His people's trials to purify them of sin and strengthen their faith, love and dependence upon Him.*
7. What does it mean to lean on something for repose? *To rest on something peacefully, without worry.*
8. What does God promise to a person (a soul) who rests on Him, peacefully? *He will never desert (abandon) to his foes (enemies).*
9. What does it mean for "hell to endeavor to shake" a soul? What does God promise when that happens to His people? *It means for Satan to bring lots of suffering upon them and try to get them to turn away from God. God promises to never forsake them. He will always be with them, always giving them strength to endure their sufferings, no matter how hard they are.*

Bible Truth Connection Question

1. How does this song relate to our Bible Truth: **God's People Suffer According to God's Good Plan?**

God's people may go through very hard, "fiery" trials, but they know that God is their firm foundation. They are "staid" on Jesus, trusting that He always be with them and only use their trials to "consume their dross"—make them holy—and bring glory to His name.

Story Connection

1. How does this song relate to today's story? *Ignatius and Polycarp leaned upon Jesus for repose (rest and strength to go through them) through their sufferings. The Lord did not forsake them but helped them to stand strong to the end. Polycarp's life really did end with a fiery trial.*

Bible Verse Connection Question

1. What does this hymn have to do with our Bible Verse: **Bible Verse: 1 Peter 1:6-7:** "...for a little while you may have suffered grief in all kinds of trials. These have come that your faith—which is of greater worth than gold which perishes though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed."?

God's people praise God that He will use all their fiery trials to refine their faith. He will never desert them or forsake. Completely the opposite is true. He will always be with them, supplying them everything they need. He will use all their trials to bring praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Life Application Questions

1. How can God's people be affected by the message of this song? *They can praise God for promising to always protect them, and help them through even the worst of trials. They can ask Him to use their trials to make them holier and stronger in their faith.*

2. How can we become God's people? *By turning away from our sins and trusting in Jesus as our Savior.*

ACTS Questions

1. What is something we can praise God for from this hymn?

Praise God for being the God who never deserts His people.

2. What are sins we can confess to God from this hymn?

Confess that many times we do not lean on Jesus or trust Him to supply us what we need when we suffer. We grumble and complain instead. We need a Savior to save us from our sins!

3. What is something we can thank God for from this hymn?

We can thank God for using the trials of His people to refine their faith; and, for giving them everything they need to endure their trials.

4. What is something we can ask God for from this hymn?

That God would work in our hearts that we confess our sins, might turn from our sins and trust Jesus as our Savior. We can ask Him to supply us what we need to endure any trials we are going through. We can ask Him to help us to come to Him and depend upon Him as we go through them.

Gospel Question

1. Fiery trials are a part of everyone's life, but God's people take joy in God as they go through theirs? Why? What has God done for them? What is the gospel?

God is the good Creator and King of the world. He made people to worship Him and live by His good laws. But we are all sinners who've rebelled against Him. We all deserve death--God's just, eternal punishment for our sins. How terrible! But God has good news for us. In His great mercy, God sent His Son, Jesus to earth as a man to save sinners. He lived the perfect life that pleases God. (He's the only one who's ever done that!) He offered it up to God His Father as the perfect sacrifice for sins when He suffered and died on the cross. Then, on the third day, Jesus rose from the dead in victory. He had fully paid for the sins of God's people, so they wouldn't have to! Now all who turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior will receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life with God. They will be His very own special people who will know Him and enjoy Him forever. We can be God's people, too, if we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our own Savior.

Song Game: Sign It, Say It, What Does It Mean?

Materials

Sign Language signs used in song, particularly choose words with important meanings you want the children to learn, such as “grace”, “redeem”, etc.

Bag or bowl

Preparing the Game

1. Cut out signs and put in bowl.

Playing the Game

1. Practice the song and signs until the children know them well. Then put all the signs we’ve learned in this bag/ bowl and mix them up.
2. Ask one of the children to choose a sign, but not show it to anyone...but you, if they need some help.
3. Ask the child to do the sign for the rest of the children and see if the other children can guess which one it is. Do the sign with the child, if desired.
4. When the children guess the sign, ask them the meaning of the word. If no one guesses the sign, put it back in the bowl to be picked again.
5. Choose another child to pick a new sign from the bag and continue.

NOTE: You might want to sing the song after you do each word or couple of words.

Game continues as number of questions, time, and attention span allow.

choose a FEW questions for discussion, then choose the game and/or music activity

Meditation Version: 1 Peter 1:6-7 NIV 1984

"...for a little while you may have suffered grief in all kinds of trials. These have come that your faith—which is of greater worth than gold which perishes though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed."

Alternate Memory Version: 1 Peter 1:6,7 NIV 1984

"...you may have suffered grief in all kinds of trials. These have come that your faith...may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed."

Understanding the Bible Verse

1. What were these believers suffering? *Grief in all kinds of trials.*
2. What is grief? *Great sadness of heart caused by pain, loss of things or people that they love.*
3. What is a trial? *Hardships or troubles we go through.*
4. What are some trials that believers go through? *Sickness, sadness, loneliness, suffering for believing in Jesus, etc.*
5. Why do trials come to believers? *Believers, like all people are sinners, living in a world spoiled by sin, face trials. But God has planned for all of their trials to be used so that their faith in God may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.*
6. What is their faith worth more than? Why? *Gold. Gold is worth a lot here on earth. It lasts better than most anything—even fire does not destroy it, but only burns out any impurities that are in it, making it worth even more. But, even gold will not last forever. Through faith in Jesus, we receive eternal life with God. That is something that will last forever and is even more wonderful than anything gold could give us.*
7. What does it mean for our faith to be proved genuine? *This is a phrase that gold workers use in Bible times. Gold is put in a very hot furnace to melt away anything that isn't gold from it and makes it completely pure. God uses suffering to make our faith in Him purer and stronger.*
8. What does it mean for Jesus Christ to be revealed? *We cannot see Jesus right now because He is in heaven. At the end of time, He will return and be revealed for all to see. He will make an end of all sin and rebellion and His people will glorify Him.*
9. What will God's people's sufferings result in when Jesus Christ is revealed? *Praise, glory and honor.*
10. Who will receive praise, glory and honor? *God and His people. His people will receive praise, glory and honor will for enduring suffering and for being made holier through them. Yet, not just them. For they will give God all the praise, glory and honor for they know that He perfectly chose their sufferings and gave them the strength to endure. He will always receive the greatest praise.*

Bible Truth Connection Question

1. What does this verse have to do with the **Bible Truth: God's People Suffer According to God's Good Plan?** *God's people know that God will use their sufferings to prove their faith genuine and result in praise, glory and honor because He is the one who perfectly planned their sufferings and gave them the strength to do this.*

Story Connection Questions

1. What does the verse have to do with our story? *Ignatius and Peter (who wrote the words of this Bible verse) were both given the chance to deny Jesus as Lord and save their lives, yet both of them refused to do so. Ignatius knew he would face death by lions and Polycarp, by fire, but the sufferings did not lead them to deny Jesus, but to make their faith—and the faith of the people in their churches—stronger.*

Life Application Questions

1. How can this verse be an encouragement to God's people today? *As they suffer all kinds of trials, they can remember that God promises to always be using them to refine their faith in God. This will be for their good and His glory.*
2. How can we become one of God's people? *By turning away from our sins and trusting in Jesus as our Savior.*

ACTS Questions

1. What is something we can praise God for from this Bible verse?

Praise God for being the perfect planner of His people's sufferings so that they will result in praise, glory and honor. He promises their sufferings will result in these good and great things.

2. What are sins we can confess to God from this Bible verse?

That many times we only grumble and complain about sufferings. We do not trust God or ask God to use them for our good and His glory.

3. What is something we can thank God for from this Bible verse?

We can thank God using the sufferings of His people to refine their faith..

4. What is something we can ask God for from this Bible verse?

We can ask God to work in our hearts that we would want to confess our sins, turn away from disobeying Him and trust in Jesus as our own Savior. We can ask Him to use all our sufferings to refine our faith in Him and that they would result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. We can ask Him to encourage God's people around the world in their sufferings, too.

The Gospel

1. What is the good news of Jesus that is the root of their faith that God promises to refine through trials? What is the gospel?

God is the good Creator and King of the world. He made people to worship Him and live by His good laws. But we are all sinners who have rebelled against Him. We all deserve death--God's just, eternal punishment for our sins. How terrible! But God has good news for us. In His great mercy, God sent His Son Jesus to earth to save sinners. Yes, Jesus, the perfect Son of God, left His home in heaven and became a man. He lived the perfect life that pleases God. (He's the only one who has ever done that!) He offered it up to God His Father as the perfect sacrifice for sins when He suffered and died on the cross. Then, on the third day, Jesus rose from the dead in victory. He had fully paid for the sins of God's people, so they wouldn't have to! Now all who turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior will receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life with God. They will be His very own special people who will know Him and enjoy Him forever. We can be God's people, too, if we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our own Savior.

Game: Bowling Ball Verse

Materials

Bible verse written up in large print so that all can see
10 Plastic bowling pins or empty 2-Liter soda bottles
Playground or foam ball

Preparing the Game

None.

Learning the Verse

Some or all of your children may be non- or early readers. Teach the verse in sections, having them say it after you. Repeat a few times. Add clapping or other movement as they say it.

Directions

1. If desired, lead the children in a discussion of a **FEW** of the most important questions before beginning game.
2. Explain the game to them as follows:
Divide the children into two teams. Have everyone say the verse together. Explain to the children that they will take turns trying to knock down bowling pins. The bowler then will recite the verse. If he can do it alone, he gets as many points for his team and pins he knocked down. If he asks for the help of another team member, then their recitation of the verse is worth half the points. If they cannot recite it, someone from the other team can try for the half point value. If a child does not knock over any pins, he can still say the verse for 1 point. The team with the most points at end of play wins.

Game continues until all children get a chance to bowl, or as time and attention span allow.

Non-competitive Option

Don't split the children into teams. Give the group a target number of points to make. Challenge the children to see how few turns it will take to reach the target number of points. Let the children take turns bowling and knocking down pins. You can have them say the verse individually, with a partner, or with the whole group. Tally the number of points on a piece of paper. Continue until target number is reached. Repeat, seeing if they can do it in less turns the second time.

Optional **TAKING IT TO OTHERS** Activity: Quiz Questions

Have the children choose a few of the questions from the game to ask the parents/other children during **TAKING IT TO OTHERS** time. Help pre-readers by whispering the question in their ear and letting them ask it aloud to the parents/other children. Make sure you read the Bible verse aloud before you ask your questions.

Directions:

1. Write words to song in large print before class.
2. Play the song for the children, helping them follow along on the song sheet.
3. Discuss the song, using a few questions from the discussion sheet. *Don't use them all!*
4. Introduce sign language for key words of your choice from sign language sheet for your song. Use as few or as many as you think the children can learn.
5. Sing and sign the song. Sign language as well as large format lyrics and sheet music are found in the PFI Unit Songbook or online.
6. If desired, play the Song Game.

Optional TAKING IT TO OTHERS Activity: Presenting and Singing the Song

1. Sing and sign the song, encouraging the watching children/parents to join in.
2. Ask the class some of the questions listed below. The Bible Truth Connection Question is particularly good to help them understand how the verse ties in with the Bible Truth.

For a Little While

For a little while you may have suffered grief in all kinds of trials.
These have come that your faith,
May be proved genuine, be proved genuine.

Refrain:

Faith! Faith! Which is of greater worth than gold,
Which perishes though refined by fire.
Faith! Faith! Which is of greater worth than gold,
Which perishes though refined by fire.

For a little while you may have had suffered grief in all kinds of trials.
These have come that your faith,
May result in praise, glory and honor. *Refrain*
First Peter One, six through seven.

Listen to it on PFI ESV Songs 12, Track 43

Song Game: Pass the Secret Sign

Materials

Sign Language signs used in song, particularly choose words with important meanings you want the children to learn, such as "grace", "redeem", etc.

Bag or bowl
Blindfold

Preparing the Game

1. Cut out signs and put in bowl.

Playing the Game

1. Practice the song and signs until the children know them well.
2. Have all the children stand in a tight circle, except one, "It" who will stand in the middle of the circle, blindfolded.
3. Have the children in the circle to put their hands behind their backs. Choose a sign from the bag and hand to a child in the circle, still keeping hands behind their backs, not looking at the sign.
4. When "It" says "Pass the Secret Sign", the children will begin to pass the sign around behind their backs.
5. When "It" says "Stop the Passing!" the child who has the sign freezes with the sign behind his back.
6. The child with the sign brings it around and looks at it. You can help the child practice the sign.
7. Then take the blindfold off of "It", watch the child with the card do the sign, then have "It" guess the name of the sign. (If desired, "It" can ask another child in the circle for help with their guess.)
8. The holder of the sign then becomes "It." Sing the song with all the signs, then repeat.

STORY REVIEW

Directions: Read and discuss Bible Truth, using a FEW of the questions. Play game. Feel free to modify the game to fit your children.

General Story Questions

1. What made life in Smyrna so hard for the Christians? *Citizens were required to confess Caesar as Lord each year. If they did not, they would not get a certificate of citizenship.*
2. What how were Christians persecuted if they did not have their certificate of citizenship? *They were kept from getting jobs and even buying food in the market.*
3. Who was Smyrna's pastor? *Polycarp.*
4. What was special about how Polycarp learned the stories and teachings of Jesus? *He learned them from the apostle John, himself.*
5. What did the Roman's call Polycarp? Why? *"The Destroyer of the Gods" because so many Romans turned to worship Jesus instead when they heard him preach.*
6. What did Polycarp help Christians from many places with? *Clearing up their confusion about what Jesus really taught.*
7. Why was Ignatius arrested? What was going to happen to him? *He would not confess Caesar as Lord and deny Jesus. He was to be thrown to the lions in Rome.*
8. Why did Polycarp do to encourage Ignatius? *Gather pastors together in Smyrna to encourage Ignatius and meet his needs as he stopped in Smyrna on his way to Rome.*
9. How did Ignatius react when thrown to the lions? *Fearlessly faced death.*
10. What did the governor want Polycarp to do to go free? *Deny Jesus and confess Caesar as Lord.*
11. What did Polycarp give as his reason for not denying Jesus? *He could not deny the King who had saved him.*
12. How did Polycarp die? *Fearlessly in a big bonfire.*

Bible Truth Connection Questions

1. What does this story have to do with our **Bible Truth: God's People Suffer According to God's Good Plan?** *God gave the Christians in Smyrna strength to faithfully endure persecution from the Romans. They counted it an honor to suffer for Him. Polycarp and Ignatius chose to suffer and die rather than deny their Lord. This would bring great glory, praise and honor to the Lord.*

Bible Verse Connection Question

1. What does the story have to do with our **Bible Verse: 1 Peter 1:6-7:** "...for a little while you may have suffered grief in all kinds of trials. These have come that your faith—which is of greater worth than gold which perishes though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed."?

Polycarp, Ignatius and the other Christians suffered grief in all sorts of trials. God used those trials to refine their faith in Jesus, so that they would even be faithful to Him when facing death in a fire! They brought praise, glory and honor to God by never denying Jesus but loving Him to the very end of their lives!

Life Application Questions

1. How can thinking about Polycarp and Ignatius affect the lives of God's people? *They can be encouragement to them to know that if God gave Polycarp and Ignatius strength for their sufferings, He can also give God's people today what they need. They can pray God would work in their hearts that they would count it on honor to suffer for His name.*
2. How can we become God's people? *By turning from our sins and trusting in Jesus as our Savior.*

ACTS Questions

1. What is something we can praise God for being that we learned in our story? *Praise God for being the Sustainer of His people, even through the hardest trials.*
2. What is something we can confess as sin that we learned in our story? *Confess that sometimes we do not act like Ignatius or Polycarp at all when we are faced others being upset about the good news of Jesus. We would rather avoid standing up and telling others about Jesus than having them make fun of us, not like us or even hurting us because of our belief in Him. We need Jesus to save us from our sins!*
3. What is something we can thank God for that we learned in our story? *We can thank Jesus for enduring the worst suffering and grief of all in order to save His people from their sins.*
4. What is something we can ask God for that we learned in our story? *We can ask God to work in our hearts, helping us to confess our sins, turn away from them and trust Jesus as our own Savior. We can ask Him to give us courage to stand up for Him and tell others about Him, even when others might not like what we have to say.*

The Gospel

1. What was the good news of Jesus that Polycarp and Ignatius and the other Christians believed in and suffered for? What is the gospel?

God is the good Creator and King of the world. He made people to worship Him and live by His good laws. But we are all sinners who've rebelled against Him. We all deserve death--God's just, eternal punishment for our sins. How terrible! But God has good news for us. In His great mercy, God sent His Son, Jesus to earth as a man to save sinners. He lived the perfect life that pleases God. (He's the only one who's ever done that!) He offered it up to God His Father as the perfect sacrifice for sins when He suffered and died on the cross. Then, on the third day, Jesus rose from the dead in victory. He had fully paid for the sins of God's people, so they wouldn't have to! Now all who turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior will receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life with God. They will be His very own special people who will know Him and enjoy Him forever. We can be God's people, too, if we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our own Savior.

Game: Egg Toss

Materials

3-5 Plastic Open-able Easter Egg of the same color s (that close well!) or balls of crumpled foil of the same size
Small piece of construction paper
Paper and Marker
Story Review Questions

Preparing the Game

1. Choose 20+ questions for your game from the Story Review Discussion Questions, or make up your own.
2. Put a small piece of construction paper in one of the eggs (or in one piece of crumpled foil, if using foil). The other eggs/foil balls remain empty.

Playing the Game

Have the children spread out randomly (or in a circle) at about arms' distance apart.. Have the children begin to toss an egg around between each other. When the leader says, "Freeze," the child with the egg opens it and reads the question to the group. If question is correctly answered, the egg is permanently retired. If the question is incorrectly answered, the egg goes back into the pile. The teacher (or the child who opened the egg) chooses another egg and play continues.

Game continues as number of questions, time, and attention span allow.

Optional TAKING IT TO OTHERS Activity: Quiz Questions

Have the children choose a few of the questions from the game to ask the parents/other children during TAKING IT TO OTHERS time. Help pre-readers by whispering the question in their ear and letting them ask it aloud to the parents/other children.

CASE REPLAY ACTIVITIES

Use this guide to review the Case Story and act it out for others to enjoy!

CASE REPLAY, JR: YOUNGEST CHILDREN

Description: The children will act out the story together, everyone doing the same action/sound effect at the same time. This activity is most suitable for kindergarteners.

Materials

The Case RePlay, Jr. script for younger children

Preparation

1. Read through the script and write in the blanks along the side possible actions/sound effects the children could do to act it out.

Instructions

1. Tell the children that they will be re-enacting the story together as you tell it.
2. As you read the script, lead the children in actions/sound effects to do with you.
3. If desired, you can read the script and stop at certain sentences and ask them what a good action/sound effect would be to act out what you just read.
4. Repeat the re-enactment one or two times more.

CASE REPLAY, SR: OLDER CHILDREN

Description: The children act out the story as a three-scene play. You will narrate it using the Case RePlay, Sr. script and they will act it out (no spoken words, for the most part), with each child assuming a different character's role. This activity is most suitable for first grade and up. You will review the story, then practice it a few times before performing it for others.

Materials

The Case RePlay, Sr. script
White board or other large format paper
Costumes and props

Preparation

1. Prepare for the play by choosing costumes and props for each character in the story. Decorate the area with any scenery props.
2. Write the words "Beginning," "Middle," "End" on a large piece of paper/whiteboard with plenty of space under each heading. You will use this paper to help the children think about the story as a three-scene play, as it is presented in the script.

Instructions

1. Tell the children that they will get to act out the story as a three-scene play, with a beginning, middle and end section. Tell them that before they can act it out, they need to think it out. as you narrate it with your script.
2. Take the children's answers as they recount the story, helping them put key incidents in the right order.
3. If desired, when they have filled in their Beginning, Middle, End, read through your whole (real) script, so they hear exactly what you will have them act out.
4. Then tell the children that it's time to practice acting out the story.
5. Assign parts to each child. If you are using costumes, do NOT give them out at this point. They will be a distraction.
6. Have all the children sit on the floor or in chairs on one side of the "stage," then call the characters up in place as their part in the story comes.
7. As you read the script, guide the children in where you want them to move or do to act it out.
8. After going through the whole script once, give out any costumes and props and act out the script once or twice more.

Optional TAKING IT TO OTHERS Activity: Re-enacting the Story

Read the script as the children act out together (younger) or assuming different roles (older) as the other children or the parents watch.

CASE REPLAY, JR--YOUNGER KIDS (KINDERGARTEN) P.2

"Welcome to our play! The name of our story is called: The Case of the Atheist Under Attack.

Our story takes place in Smyrna (modern day Izmir, Turkey) about one hundred years after Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead.

And now we present: "The Case of the Atheist Under Attack."

Scene 1:

Actions:

Smyrna was the most beautiful city in the Roman province of Asia. Wealthy merchants lived in rich houses and the city had many beautiful buildings and temples. But life in Smyrna was very hard for Christians. Because they refused to worship the Roman gods or confess Caesar as Lord, they were called atheists. They couldn't get jobs or even buy food at the markets easily. They lost their rights as Roman citizens and were badly hurt. A young, godly man named Polycarp was the pastor of the church in Smyrna. He had been taught about Jesus from the apostle John, himself. Polycarp was a great teacher and preacher. He helped confused Christians from all over understand what Jesus taught. The Romans called him "The Destroyer of the Gods" because so many Romans turned from worshiping Roman gods to worship Jesus after hearing him preach.

Scene 2:

One day Polycarp heard that Ignatius, the old pastor in Antioch, had been arrested and sentenced to be thrown to lions in Rome for confessing Jesus not Caesar as Lord. Polycarp knew that the Romans soldiers in charge of Ignatius would travel through Smyrna on their way to Rome. He called together the pastors from other cities to come to Smyrna to encourage Ignatius and meet his needs when he came through. When Ignatius and the soldiers arrived in Smyrna, Polycarp and the pastors comfort him. Ignatius tells them he isn't afraid, but looks forward to getting to be with Jesus. He tells them to stay strong in suffering. In a few weeks, Polycarp hears that Ignatius died bravely. He never forgets Ignatius' courage.

Scene 3

Polycarp stays in Smyrna for sixty years and becomes an old man. Persecutions in Smyrna get worse. During a festival to Caesar, the crowds call for Polycarp to confess Caesar as Lord. They wait in the huge theatre/arena as soldiers search for Polycarp. Two of Polycarp's servant boys are forced into telling that the believers have hidden Polycarp in the haystack at a farm. The soldiers find Polycarp and bring him into the arena on a donkey. The governor tells Polycarp to put a pinch of incense on the altar and confess Caesar as Lord to save his life. Polycarp refuses to deny Jesus, his King who has loved him for eighty-seven years. The governor threatens to throw him to lions or face death by fire. Polycarp warns the governor of the fires of hell that are even worse. The governor declares Polycarp a Christian and must die by fire. The people rush to gather wood for the bonfire. Polycarp prays, the fire is lit and he dies in the flames.

Bible Truth Tie-In:

The Bible Truth we are learning is: **God's People Suffer According to God's Good Plan.** Ignatius and Polycarp endured their suffering as an honor. They showed them that the Lord truly did give strength to endure even these kinds of terrible trials.

CASE REPLAY, SR--OLDER KIDS (1ST GRADE AND UP) P.3

Welcome to our play! The name of our story is called: The Case of the Atheist Under Attack.

Our story takes place in Smyrna (modern day Izmir, Turkey) about one hundred years after Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead.

The characters in our story are: Merchants, Caesar, People of Smyrna, Smyrna Christians, Polycarp, Apostle John, Other Pastors, Ignatius, Roman Soldiers, People of Rome, Governor of Smyrna.

And now we present: "The Case of the Atheist Under Attack."

Scene 1: (Beginning)

Smyrna was the most beautiful city in the Roman province of Asia. Wealthy merchants lived in rich houses and the city had many beautiful buildings and temples. But life in Smyrna was very hard for Christians. Because they refused to worship the Roman gods or confess Caesar as Lord, they were called atheists. They couldn't get jobs or even buy food at the markets easily. They lost their rights as Roman citizens and were badly hurt. A young, godly man named Polycarp was the pastor of the church in Smyrna. He had been taught about Jesus from the apostle John, himself. Polycarp was a great teacher and preacher. He helped confused Christians from all over understand what Jesus taught. The Romans called him "The Destroyer of the Gods" because so many Romans turned from worshipping Roman gods to worship Jesus after hearing him preach.

Scene 2: (Middle)

One day Polycarp heard that Ignatius, the old pastor in Antioch, had been arrested and sentenced to be thrown to lions in Rome for confessing Jesus not Caesar as Lord. Polycarp knew that the Romans soldiers in charge of Ignatius would travel through Smyrna on their way to Rome. He called together the pastors from other cities to come to Smyrna to encourage Ignatius and meet his needs when he came through. When Ignatius and the soldiers arrived in Smyrna, Polycarp and the pastors comfort him. Ignatius tells them he isn't afraid, but looks forward to getting to be with Jesus. He tells them to stay strong in suffering. In a few weeks, Polycarp hears that Ignatius died bravely. He never forgets Ignatius' courage.

Scene 3: (End)

Polycarp stays in Smyrna for sixty years and becomes an old man. Persecutions in Smyrna get worse. During a festival to Caesar, the crowds call for Polycarp to confess Caesar as Lord. They wait in the huge theatre/arena as soldiers search for Polycarp. Two of Polycarp's servant boys are forced into telling that the believers have hidden Polycarp in the haystack at a farm. The soldiers find Polycarp and bring him into the arena on a donkey. The governor tells Polycarp to put a pinch of incense on the altar and confess Caesar as Lord to save his life. Polycarp refuses to deny Jesus, his King who has loved him for eighty-seven years. The governor threatens to throw him to lions or face death by fire. Polycarp warns the governor of the fires of hell that are even worse. The governor declares Polycarp a Christian and must die by fire. The people rush to gather wood for the bonfire. Polycarp prays, the fire is lit and he dies in the flames.

Bible Truth Tie-In:

The Bible Truth we are learning is: **God's People Suffer According to God's Good Plan.** Ignatius and Polycarp endured their suffering as an honor. They showed them that the Lord truly did give strength to endure even these kinds of terrible trials.

Bible Truth Tie-In:

The Bible Truth we are learning is: **God's People Suffer According to God's Good Plan.** The Streetlayer cried out

A Pinch of Incense on a Roman Altar to Caesar

Description

The children will make a model of the Roman governor of Smyrna and a stone altar with incense on it, using salt dough, spices and a few decorating supplies.

Materials

- 1 ½ -2 cups of salt dough per craft (see recipe below)
- Various implements to decorate with, such as garlic presses, toothpicks, and forks
- Ground cloves, ginger and cinnamon
- 1/3 green or gold pipe cleaner per craft
- 1 white tissue per craft
- Jiggly eyes, if desired
- Pieces of Cereal box or poster board

Preparing the Craft

1. Mix up the salt dough and put in an airtight container until ready to use.
2. Set out “carving implements”
3. Set out the spices in small bowls.
4. Cut the pipe cleaners into thirds.
5. Make a sample for the children to see.

Salt Dough Recipe

2 cups all-purpose flour, 1 cup salt, 1 cup cold water

1. Mix together flour and salt. Gradually add the water. Mix, then knead until well blended.

Making the Craft

1. Show children your sample.
2. Have the children shape about ½ cup of their dough into a simple rectangular altar shape and add designs on it with the implements. The garlic press makes wonderful strands, while the toothpicks and forks can be used to carve designs. They can carve the name “Caesar” into it, if they want.
3. Let the children add to the top of their altar a combination of the spices. This is a great time to talk about how meaningless sprinkling spices (incense) on an altar must have seemed, yet how it stood for so much that Polycarp would rather die rather do it.
4. Have them take the rest of their salt dough and shape it into a simple “governor” man. Again, they can use the garlic press to make hair for him.
5. Twist the pipe cleaner into a laurel (a circlet) and put it on the governor’s head.
6. Bunch up the ends of the white tissue, bring them together and then tape them together. This makes a simple toga to slip over the head of the governor and let drape diagonally from one shoulder across to his opposite thigh or so.
7. Insert jiggly eyes into his head, if desired.
8. Have the children set their governor and altar onto a suitable sized piece of cereal box/poster board. (If you use white poster board, the children could also decorate it in a mock mosaic pattern with markers, as was common on the floors of important Roman buildings and places.)

Making a Bible Truth Connection

Once the children have settled into their craft, use the Bible Truth- Craft Connection Sheet to lead discussion about the craft. Note that most of these questions echo the questions on the case board, providing a review of what the children learned earlier.

Optional **TAKING IT TO OTHERS** Activity: Craft Presentation

If you are presenting the craft to other children or parents the children can hold up their crafts (or your model craft) and read their Bible Truth Connection answers to explain the importance of the craft.

CASE CRAFT**Discussion Guide****Instructions:**

As the children are settled into making their craft, ask them these questions to help them understand the craft's significance. Use the answers provided to guide the children's answers.

Discussion Questions

1. Where did our story take place?

In Smyrna.

2. Who was Polycarp told to offer a pinch of incense to?

The Roman King, Caesar.

3. Why did Polycarp refuse to do this?

By doing that, he would be saying that Caesar was his God and Lord. He would be denying Jesus.

4. What is Bible Truth that we are learning?

God's People Suffer According to God's Good Plan.

5. What does our craft have to do with our Bible Truth?

God gave Polycarp the faith and strength to keep worshiping Him and to face death bravely because God always helps His people through the suffering He allows in their lives as part of His good and perfect plan.

6. What can our craft help us remember?

No matter how much God's people suffer, they can always trust that God is able to sustain them through them. He will always use their trials for their good and His glory.

TAKING IT TO OTHERS**Craft Presentation****Instructions:**

Have children hold up your model craft/their crafts. Choose five children (or you say) the five sections below to explain the craft's importance.

Presentation:

1. Our craft is: A Pinch of Incense on a Roman Altar.

2. In Smyrna, Polycarp chose to die rather than offer a pinch of incense on a Roman altar to Caesar because he refused to deny Jesus as his Savior and Lord.

3. Our Bible Truth is: God's People Suffer According to God's Good Plan.

4. God gave Polycarp the faith and strength to keep worshiping Him and to face death bravely because God always helps His people through the suffering He allows in their lives as part of His good and perfect plan.

5. Our craft can help us remember that no matter how much God's people suffer, they can always trust that God is able to sustain them through them. He will always use their trials for their good and His glory.

Note: Even non-readers can participate in presenting the craft, if you will whisper what they are to say in their ear and let them say it aloud for the others to hear.

BEFORE CLASS:**1. PICK YOUR PERSON**

VIPPs can be anyone in your church! Typically, they fall into 6 categories: Church staff, Elders, Deacons/deaconesses, Special Volunteers (people who aren't paid, but spend a lot of time helping out in particular ways), Supported Workers (aka missionaries), and Church Members.

2. GATHER YOUR FACTS

Use the VIPP Information Sheet to write down the facts about your VIPP. The information on this worksheet is used in the VIPP activities, listed in the "Choose an Activity" section below.

DURING THE ACTIVITY:**1. INTRODUCE YOUR VIPP**

Introduce your VIPP to the children, using the VIPP Information Sheet. Fill in a set of VIPP Clue Cards with the information for your VIPP. If desired, you can even have the actual person come into class for the children to meet.

Need help describing what someone does for the church in a kid-friendly way? Check out the list of common VIPPs on the Praise Factory website in the PFI resources. There are lots of kid-friendly descriptions for common VIPP's, such as pastors, elders, deacons and a lot more.

2. PRAY!

Lead the children in praying for the VIPP. Ask the children if they would like to pray for one of the VIPPs prayer requests. Even non-readers can pray for the VIPP if you whisper the prayer request in their ear, then let them say it aloud. Never force a child to pray!

3. CHOOSE AN ACTIVITY

There are two activities you can use to help the children learn about the VIPP:

VIPP Clue Cards: These are nine coloring sheets in which children fill in the nine things they learn about the VIPP from the VIPP Information Sheet. Photocopy a set of each child. Use as few or as many of these Clue Cards as you desire. They are found in the back of this book.

VIPP Game: This is a game that uses a set of Clue Cards for one or two VIPPs.

Choose a VIPP and fill in his/her information on the VIPP Information Sheet. Fill in a set of VIPP Clue Cards with the information for your VIPP. Tell the children about the VIPP, having them fill in the VIPP Clue Cards with the key facts as they learn them. Write any words the children need to write on a white-board or other piece of paper so they can see how to spell them. Help younger children write these words on their clue cards. Ideas for how to tell the children about many common VIPPs are listed at praisefactory.org with the resources for this Bible Truth.

Optional TAKING IT TO OTHERS Activity: Introduce and Pray for the VIPP

If you are presenting the VIPP to other children or parents you can assign children to hold up the 10 clue cards and say what each card tells about the VIPP. (Or, you can have the children hold them up as you tell what each one means.) Then lead the children in praying for the VIPP.

Game: Over, Under and Throw

Materials

Information Sheet for one VIPP

2 Set of Clue Cards

8 8.5" x 11" Manilla Envelopes

Nerf Ball or other soft ball for indoor use

Box or basket big enough for the envelopes to fit in and the ball to land in.

Preparing the Game

1. Fill in one set of clue sheets for the VIPP you are using.
2. Tape the other (blank) set of Clue Cards to the outside of the manilla envelopes.
3. Put the filled-in clue cards in the corresponding envelope.
4. Put all the Clue Cards envelopes in a bag, except for the ones with the names and pictures of the VIPPs.
5. Place the envelopes in the basket, a good shooting distance from where the child at the head of the line will stand.

Playing the Game

Reveal: Tell the children about the VIPP, showing them your filled-in clue cards as you tell about them.

Review: Have the children line up, all facing forward. Give the ball to the last child in line. At your signal, have them pass the ball to the next child with an overhead pass; then that child passes the ball through the legs of the next child, etc. until the ball reaches the first child. The first child in line then tries to make a basket. If he succeeds, he gets to go up and pick out an envelope to open. The teacher (or the child) tells the Clue Card category. The other children try to remember what the VIPP's answer was. Open it up and see if they got it right. If they did, the Clue Card is retired. If not, it can be added back with the Clue Cards in the basket. Game continues until all the envelopes have been retired or as time or attention span allows.

VIPP INFORMATION SHEET

VIPP NAME:

WHAT VIPP LOOKS LIKE

Man or Woman? _____

Hair color? _____

Eye color? _____

FAVORITE ANIMAL

FAVORITE FOOD

FAVORITE FREE TIME ACTIVITY

WHAT VIPP DOES DURING WEEK

VIPP GROUP OF SERVICE:

Church Member

Deacon

Elder

Church Staff

Special Volunteer

Supported Worker
(Missionary)

3 WAYS VIPP SERVES CHURCH

**3 WAYS TO PRAY FOR
THE VIPP**
